



Your Guide to Speaking Gulf Arabic

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دليلك إلى التحدث بالعربية الخليجية

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By:

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Preface

This book has been prepared to help learners speak and understand **Gulf Spoken Arabic**, which is commonly used in countries such as Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman.

The aim of this book is to make the language easy to learn and use in daily life. It includes simple words, common phrases, and real-life dialogues to help you speak with confidence in different situations.

Whether you are living in the Gulf, visiting, or just interested in the culture and language, this book will be a useful guide on your journey.

We pray that this work benefits all learners and helps build better communication and understanding.

Thank you for choosing this book.

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Lesson 1: Greetings & Introductions

Marḥaba - (مرحبا) Hello

Explanation: A very common and friendly greeting used throughout the Arab world.

As-salām 'alaykum - (السلام عليكم) Peace be upon you

Explanation: The traditional Islamic greeting.

Wa 'alaykum as-salām - (وعليكم السلام) And peace be upon you

Explanation: The standard response to "As-salām 'alaykum".

Kayf ḥālak - (كيف حالك؟) ?How are you? (to a male)

Kayf ḥālich - (كيف حالج؟) ?How are you? (to a female)

Explanation: "Kayf" means "how," and "ḥālak/ḥālich" means "your condition/state." The "k" at the end is for males, and "ch" (pronounced like "j" in "jump" or a soft "ch" in "church") is for females.

Ana bikhayr, al-ḥamdulillāh - (أنا بخير، الحمد لله) I'm fine, praise be to God

Explanation: "Ana" is "I," "bikhayr" is "fine" or "good," and "al-ḥamdulillāh" is a common expression of gratitude and often used as a polite way to say "I'm fine".

Introductions:

Shū ismak - (شو اسمك؟) ?What's your name? (to a male)

Shū ismich - (شو اسمي؟) What's your name? (to a female)

Explanation: "Shū" (or "aysh" in some areas) means "what."
"Ismak/ismich" means "your name".

Ismee [Your Name] - (اسمي [اسمك]) My name is [Your Name]

Explanation: "Ismee" means "my name".

Min wayn inta - (من وين انت؟) Where are you from? (to a male)

Min wayn inti - (من وين انتي؟) Where are you from? (to a female)

Explanation: "Min" means "from," "wayn" means "where," and
"inta/inti" means "you".

Ana min [Country/City] - (أنا من [دولة/مدينة]) I am from [Country/City]

Explanation: Straightforward "I am from"...

Examples in Conversation:

A: Marḥaba! Kayf ḥālak? (Hello! How are you?)

B: Marḥaba! Ana bikhayr, al-ḥamdulillāh. Shū ismak? (Hello! I'm fine, praise be to God. What's your name?)

A: Ismee Ahmed. Min wayn inta? (My name is Ahmed. Where are you from?)

B: Ana min Kuwait. Winta? (I'm from Kuwait. And you?)

A: Ana min Amreeka. (I'm from America.)

Lesson 2: Basic Verbs & Commands

Let's look at some essential verbs and how to give simple commands.

Common Verbs (Present Tense - Male Speaker):

Gulf Arabic often simplifies verb conjugations compared to Modern Standard Arabic. Here, we'll focus on the pattern for "I" and "you" (male).

Abee - (أبي) I want

Tibee - (تبي) You want (to a male)

Explanation: Used for desires. "Tibeen (تبين) "is for "you want" (female).

Ashrab - (أشرب) I drink

Tishrab - (تشرب) You drink (to a male)

Akul - (أكل) I eat

Takul - (تاكل) You eat (to a male)

Arooh - (أروح) I go

Tirooh - (تروح) You go (to a male)

Ajy/Ayee - (أجي/أيي) I come

Tijy/Tayee - (تجي/تأيي) You come (to a male)

Aswwi - (أسوي) I do/make

Tijy/Tswwi - (تسوي) You do/make (to a male)

Simple Commands (Imperative)

To make a command, you often just use the 'you' form of the verb without the pronoun.

Ta'al hni - (تعال هني!) !Come here! (to a male)

Explanation: "Ta'al" means "come!" (male), "hni" means "here".

Rooh - (روح!) !Go! (to a male)

Ashrab mayy - (اشرب ماي!) !Drink water! (to a male)

Explanation: "Mayy" (or "maay") means "water".

Kul - (كل!) !Eat! (to a male)

Swwi hātha - (سوي هذا!) !Do this! (to a male)

Explanation: "Hātha" means "this".

Examples in Conversation:

A: Shū tabee takul? (What do you want to eat?)

B: Abee akul samak. (I want to eat fish.)

A: Rooh as-sooq al-yoom? (Are you going to the market today?)

B: Ay, arooh as-sooq. (Yes, I'm going to the market.)

Lesson 3: Common Phrases & Vocabulary

Let's expand practical phrases and vocabulary.

Essential Phrases:

Shukran - (شكرا) Thank you

'Afwan - (عفوا) You're welcome / Excuse me

Explanation: Used both as "you're welcome" and to get someone's attention or apologize politely.

Ay/Na'am - (أَي/نعم) Yes

Explanation: "Ay" is very common in Gulf.

La - (لا) 'No

In shā' Allāh - (إن شاء الله) God willing

Explanation: Used frequently to express hope or future intention.

Mashā' Allāh - (ما شاء الله) What God has willed

Explanation: Expresses admiration or appreciation for something good, also used to ward off the evil eye.

Yallā - (يلا!) !Let's go! / Come on!

Explanation: A very common and versatile phrase.

Khalāṣ - (خلاص) Enough / Finished / Done

Explanation: Extremely common to indicate something is complete or sufficient.

Mumkin - (ممکن...؟) ?...Is it possible...? / May I?...

Explanation: Used to make polite requests.

Example: Mumkin mayy - (ممکن ماي؟) ?Could I have water?

Mā afham - (ما أفهم) I don't understand

Mā adri - (ما أدري) I don't know

Basic Vocabulary:

Mayy/Maay - (ماي) Water

Chay - (چاي) Tea

Gahwa - (قهوة) Coffee

Akul - (أكل) Food

Bayt - (بيت) House

Sayyāra - (سيارة) Car

Sooq - (سوق) Market

Yoom - (يوم) Day

Layl - (ليل) Night

Sabāḥ - (صباح) Morning

Masa - (مساء) 'Evening

Filoos - (فلوس) Money

Waḥid - (واحد) One

Ithnayn - (اثنين) Two

Thalātha - (ثلاثة) Three

Examples in Conversation:

A: Mumkin chay, shukran. ممكن شاي شكرا (Could I have tea, please.)

B: 'Afwan. (You're welcome.) عفوا

A: Yallā, arooḥ il-bayt. يلا اروح البيت (Let's go, I'm going home.)

B: Khalāṣ, ana jaahiz. خلاص أنا جاهز (Done, I'm ready.)

A: Tabee filoosa? تبي فلوس (Do you want money?)

B: La', shukran. Mā abee. لا شكرا ما أبي (No, thank you. I don't want.)

Important Notes on Gulf Arabic:

Pronunciation: Gulf Arabic has some distinct sounds. The letter ق (qaf) is often pronounced as a hard 'g' (like in "go"), especially in Kuwait and parts of Saudi Arabia. The letter ك (kaf) can sometimes be pronounced as 'ch' (like in "church"), particularly for the feminine 'you' (inti) as 'inch' or 'ich'. The letter ج (jeem) is often pronounced 'y' in many Gulf regions (e.g., "riyal" instead of "rijal" for "man"). However, for general understanding, using the more standard Arabic pronunciation for these letters will still be understood.

Regional Variations: Remember that even within the Gulf, dialects vary. What's common in Kuwait might be slightly different in Oman or the UAE, but these basic phrases will serve you well across the region.

Informality: Gulf Arabic is a spoken dialect, so it's less formal than Modern Standard Arabic. You'll find contractions and simplified grammar.

Practice is Key: The best way to learn is to listen and speak. Try to immerse yourself in Gulf media or find opportunities to speak with native speakers.

We hope these lessons provide a solid foundation for your journey into learning spoken Gulf Arabic!

Lesson 4: Asking for & Giving Directions

Knowing how to ask for and give directions is incredibly useful.

Key Vocabulary for Directions:

Wayn - (وين؟) Where?

Hni - (هني) Here

Hnāk - (هناك) There

Yameen - (يمين) Right

Yesār - (يسار) Left

Sidha - (سيده) Straight ahead

Gadām - (جدام) In front / Ahead

Warā - (ورى) Behind

Foog - (فوق) Up / Above

Taḥat - (تحت) Down / Below

Gareeb min - (قريب من) Near (to)

Ba'eed 'an - (بعيد عن) Far (from)

Sharee - (شارع) 'Street

Madkhal - (مدخل) Entrance

Makhraj - (مخرج) Exit

Dūwār - (دوار) Roundabout

Ishārat muroor - (إشارة مرور) Traffic light

Asking for Directions:

Wayn [place] - (وين [المكان]؟) ?Where is [place]?

Example: Wayn as-sooq - (وين السوق؟) ?Where is the market?

Kayf arooh [place] - (كيف أروح [المكان]؟) ?How do I go to [place]?
(Male speaker asking)

Example: Kayf arooh al-mustashfa - (كيف أروح المستشفى؟) ?How do I go to the hospital?

Mumkin tidullni 'ala [place] - (ممکن تدلني على [المكان]؟) ?Can you show me the way to [place]? (Male speaker, polite)

Explanation: "Tidullni" means "show me the way".

Giving Directions (Common Commands)

Rooh sidha - (روح سیده) Go straight ahead (to a male)

Liff yameen - (لف يمين) Turn right (to a male)

Liff yesār - (لف يسار) Turn left (to a male)

Waggif hni - (وقف هني) Stop here (to a male)

Khudh awwal laffa yameen - (خذ أول لفه يمين) Take the first right turn (to a male)

Explanation: "Laffa (لفه)" means "turn".

Emshi shwayy - (امشي شوي) Walk a little (to a male)

Explanation: "Emshi" means "walk," "shwayy" means "a little/a bit".

'Ind ishārat al-muroor - (عند إشارة المرور) At the traffic light

Ba'ad ad-dūwār - (بعد الدوار) After the roundabout

Al-bayt hnak, ba'ad ash-sharee - (البيت هناك، بعد الشارع). 'The house is there, after the street.

Example Dialogue for Directions:

You: 'Afwan, wayn al-bank? (Excuse me, where is the bank?)

Local: Ay bank tibee? Fee akthar min bank hni. (Which bank do you want? There's more than one bank here.)

You: Abee al-Bank al-Watani. (I want the National Bank.)

Local: Hmm... okay. Rooh sidha (لين تلاقى دوار كبير). Hmm... okay. Go straight ahead until you find a big roundabout(.

You: Okay, rooḥ sidha il-dūwār. (Okay, go straight to the roundabout.)

Local: Ay, ba'ad ad-dūwār, khudh thani laffa yesār. Al-bank بيصير
(على يمينك). Yes, after the roundabout, take the second left turn. The bank will be on your right(.

You: Shukran jazeelan! (Thank you very much!)

Local: 'Afwan, ma qṣṣart. (You're welcome, no problem.)

Lesson 5: Shopping & Bargaining

Shopping is a big part of life in the Gulf. Here are some phrases for common interactions.

Key Vocabulary for Shopping:

Sooq - (سوق) Market (traditional/souk)

Mall - (مول) Mall (modern shopping center)

Maḥall - (محل) Shop / Store

Kam hatha - (كم هذا؟) How much is this?

Kam sāl'ir hatha - (كم سعره هذا؟) What is the price of this?

Ghāli - (غالي) Expensive

Rakheeṣ - (رخيص) Cheap

Abee ashtiree - (أبي أشتري) I want to buy

Abee ashūf - (أبي أشوف) I want to see

Yimkin nakhffidh as-sa'ir - (ممکن نخفض السعر؟) Can we lower the price? (Polite, asking for a discount)

Explanation: Literally "Is it possible we lower the price"?

Mugāwama - (مقاومة) Bargaining (the act of) - Less common to use the word, more common to just do it.

Falūs - (فلوس) Money

Kash - (كاش) Cash

Visa/MasterCard - (فيزا/ماستر كارد) Visa/MasterCard

Fattoora - (فاتورة) Bill / Receipt

Shopping Phrases

Kam hatha - (كم هذا؟) ?How much is this?

Hatha ghāli - (هذا غالي). This is expensive.

Fee khasam - (في خصم؟) ?Is there a discount?

Abee akhath hatha - (أبي آخذ هذا). I want to take this (I'll buy this).

Mumkin ashūf shayy thani - (ممکن أشوف شي ثاني؟) ?Can I see something else?

Explanation: "Shayy (شيء)" means "thing," "thani (ثاني)" means "another/second".

Mā abee - (ما أبي). I don't want (it).

Abee size akbar/asghar - (أبي سايز أكبر/أصغر). I want a bigger/smaller size.

Explanation: Gulf Arabic commonly uses English words like "size." "Akbar" means "bigger," "asghar" means "smaller".

Abee loon thani - (أبي لون ثاني). I want another color.

Explanation: "Loon (لون)" means "color".

Ana bshtiree hatha - (أنا بشتري هذا). I will buy this. (Future tense, "b" prefix)

Mumkin atfa' bil-kash/bil-visa - (ممکن أدفع بالكاش/بالفيزا؟) ?Can I pay with cash/Visa?

Explanation: "Atfa (أدفع) ""means "I pay".

Bargaining Tips:

Start with a lower offer than you're willing to pay.

Be friendly and persistent.

It's a common practice in traditional souks; less so in modern malls.

If they say "final price," you can often still get a small reduction or a free add-on.

Example Dialogue for Shopping:

You: Marḥaba! Kam hatha al-fustān? مرحبا! كم هذا الفستان

(Hello! How much is this dress?)

Shopkeeper: Hatha bi-khamsīn dinar ya ukhti. هذا ابيع خميس دينار يا أختي.

(This is 50 dinars, my sister.) (Using "ukhti" for "my sister" is a common polite address to a female customer.)

You: Khamsīn?! Ghāli wāyid! Yimkin nakhffidh as-sa'ir?

خمسين غالي وايد يمكن نخفض السعر

(Fifty?! Very expensive! Can we lower the price?)

Shopkeeper: La wallah ya ukhti, hatha akhar sa'ir. (No, by God, my sister, this is the final price.) لا والله اختي هذا آخر سعر.

You: 'Aṭini bi-thalatheen. اعطني بثلاثين (Give it to me for 30.)

Shopkeeper: Mā yishtaġil. A'ṭeeki arba'een. ما يشتغل اعطيك اربعين (It doesn't work. I'll give it to you for 40.)

You: Khalāṣ, a'ṭeeni bi-thalatha wa thalatheen, wa ana akhtha. (Okay, give it to me for 33, and I'll take it.)

Shopkeeper: Yallā, mumshi. Bal 'afiya. (Okay, it's good. Enjoy.)

You: Shukran! (Thank you!)

Lesson 6: Time & Numbers (Expanded)

Let's expand on telling time and introduce more numbers.

Numbers (0-10 & Beyond):

Ṣifr0 - (صفر)

Wāḥid1 - (واحد)

Ithnayn2 - (اثنين)

Thalātha3 - (ثلاثة)

Arba'a4 - (أربعة)

Khamṣa5 - (خمسة)

Sitta6 - (ستة)

Sab'a7 - (سبعة)

Thamānya8 - (ثمانية)

Tis'a9 - (تسعة)

'Ashara10 - (عشرة)

Ḥadāsh11 - (حداش)

Thna'ash12 - (ثناعش)

'Ishrīn20 - (عشرين)

Thalathīn30 - (ثلاثين)

Mi'a100 - (مئة)

Alf1000 - (ألف)

Asking about Time:

Kam as-sā'a - (كم الساعة؟) What time is it?

Explanation: Literally "How much is the hour"?

Ay sā'a - (أي ساعة؟) At what time?

Telling Time (Basic)

As-sā'a [Number] - (الساعة [العدد]) It's [Number] o'clock

Example: As-sā'a thalātha - (الساعة ثلاثة.) It's 3 o'clock.

Wa nuṣṣ - (ونص) And a half (for :30)

Example: As-sā'a sab'a wa nuṣṣ - (الساعة سبعة ونص.) It's 7:30.

Wa rubu - (وربع) 'And a quarter (for :15)

Example: As-sā'a khamṣa wa rubu - (الساعة خمسة وربع.) It's 5:15.

Illā rubu - (إلا ربع) 'Quarter to (for :45)

Example: As-sā'a thalātha illā rubu - (الساعة ثلاثة إلا ربع.) It's quarter to 3. (2:45)

Illā 'ashara daqāyiq - (إلا عشر دقائق) Ten minutes to

Example: As-sā'a arba'a illā 'ashara daqāyiq - (الساعة أربعة إلا عشر دقائق) It's ten minutes to 4. (3:50)

Time of Day Vocabulary:

Sabāḥ - (صباح) Morning

Duhr - (ظهر) Noon / Midday

'Aṣr - (عصر) Afternoon (mid-afternoon, before sunset)

Masa - (مساء) 'Evening

Layl - (ليل) Night

Al-yoom - (اليوم) Today

Bācher - (باجر) Tomorrow

Amṣ - (أمس) Yesterday

Example Dialogue for Time:

You: Marḥaba! Kam as-sā'a al-ḥeen? (Hello! What time is it now?)

Local: As-sā'a tis'a wa rubu'. (It's 9:15.)

You: Ay sāl'a ar-riḥla? (At what time is the flight/trip?)

Local: Ar-riḥla as-sāl'a khamṣa masa'. (The flight is at 5 PM.)

You: Wayn arooḥ bācher? (Where are you going tomorrow?)

Local: Bācher arooḥ as-sooq as-sāl'a 'ashara sabāḥ. (Tomorrow I'm going to the market at 10 AM.)

Important Tips for Learning Khaleeji:

Listen Actively: Pay attention to how people speak. Watch Gulf dramas, or just observe conversations.

Mimicry: Try to imitate the pronunciation and intonation you hear.

Don't Be Afraid of Mistakes: Everyone makes mistakes when learning a new language. The important thing is to try!

Focus on Core Phrases: Start with phrases you'll use frequently, like greetings, asking for help, and basic transactions.

Local Nuances: While I'm giving "general" Gulf Arabic, be aware that there are nuances. For example, some regions say "aysh" instead of "shū" for "what." Both are widely understood.

Formal vs. Informal: The lessons here are focused on informal, spoken Arabic. Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is used in formal settings, media, and written communication, but it's not typically spoken in daily interactions in the Gulf.

Lesson 7: Daily Routines & Activities

Let's expand verb vocabulary to talk about common daily activities.

Key Verbs (Present Tense - "I" form):

We'll focus on the "I" form, and then you can usually derive the "you" (male/female) forms by changing the initial letter.

Ag'ad - (أُقعد) I wake up / I sit

Explanation: Versatile verb. Can mean "to sit" or "to wake up" depending on context.

Akom - (أقوم) I get up

Atrawwaq - (أُتريق) I have breakfast

Explanation: Specific to Gulf dialect.

Aftir - (أفطر) I have breakfast

Atghadda - (أُتغدى) I have lunch

Ata'ashsha - (أُتعشى) I have dinner

Ashab - (أُسبح) I shower / I swim

Explanation: Can mean both. "Ashab fil-baḥar - (أُسبح في البحر) "I swim in the sea.

Arōḥ - (أروح) I go

Arja - (أرجع) 'I return / I come back

Ashtaghel - (أُشتغل) I work

Adrus - (أدرس) I study

Anām - (أنام) I sleep

Ashūf - (أشوف) I see / I watch

Asma - (أسمع) 'I hear / I listen

Agra - (أقرا) I read

Aktib - (أكتب) I write

Daily Time Markers:

Kull yoom - (كل يوم) Every day

Kull sabāḥ - (كل صباح) Every morning

Kull masa - (كل مساء) 'Every evening

Bād al-fajir - (بعد الفجر) After dawn prayer (early morning)

Qabl ad-duhr - (قبل الظهر) Before noon

Ba'ad ad-duhr - (بعد الظهر) After noon

Al-ḥeen - (الحين) Now

Ba'adeen - (بعدين) Later

Awwal shayy - (أول شيء) First thing

Example Sentences:

Kull yoom, ag'ad as-sā'a sab'a sabāḥ . (كل يوم، أقعد الساعة سبعة صباح.)
-Every day, I wake up at 7 AM.

Ba'adīn atrawwaq, wa arooḥ ash-shugul . (بعدين أتريق، وأروح الشغل.)
Then I have breakfast, and I go to work.

Al-yoom, ashūf film fil-layl - (اليوم، أشوف فلم في الليل). Today, I will watch a movie tonight.

Abee anām al-ḥeen - (أبي أنام الحين). I want to sleep now.

Ay sā'a tirja' al-bayt - (أي ساعة ترجع البيت؟) What time do you return home? (to a male)

Arja' al-bayt as-sā'a khamṣa masa - (أرجع البيت الساعة خمسة مساء). I return home at 5 PM.

Lesson 8: Food & Ordering

Food is a central part of Gulf culture. Here's how to talk about it and order in a restaurant.

Essential Food Vocabulary:

Akul - (أكل) Food

Mayy/Maay - (ماي) Water

'Aṣeer - (عصير) Juice

Ḥaleeb - (حليب) Milk

Laham - (لحم) Meat (red meat)

Dajā - (دجاج) Chicken

Samak - (سمك) Fish

Khubiz - (خبز) Bread

Timman/Aych - (تمن/عيش) Rice

Explanation: "Timin" is common in Iraq, "Aych" in Kuwait/UAE/Qatar/Bahrain/KSA.

Khudhrawāt - (خضروات) Vegetables

Fawākih - (فواكه) Fruits

Salāṭa - (سلطة) Salad

Sukar - (سكر) Sugar

Milah - (ملح) Salt

'Ajeena - (عجينة) Dough / Pasta

Makāroona - (معكرونة) Pasta / Macaroni (common loanword)

Mugah - (مقهى) Coffee shop / Cafe

Maṭ'am - (مطعم) Restaurant

Wājīd/Ktheer - (وايد/كثير) A lot / Much

Shwayy/Galeel - (شوي/قليل) A little / Few

Laddheeth - (لذيذ) Delicious

Ordering in a Restaurant:

Abee [food item], min faḍlak - (أبي [اسم الأكل]، من فضلك). I want [food item], please. (to a male)

Explanation: "Min faḍlak" is "please" (to male), "min faḍlich" (to female).

Shū 'andkum - (شو عندكم؟) What do you have? (asking about menu items)

Explanation: "Andkum" means "you (plural) have".

Mumkin al-menu - (ممکن المنيو؟) Can I have the menu?

Mumkin al-ḥisāb - (ممکن الحساب؟) Can I have the bill?

Explanation: "Al-ḥisāb" means "the bill/account".

Fee ay shayy akhar - (في أي شي آخر؟) Is there anything else?

Hātha kull shayy, shukran - (هذا كل شيء، شكراً). This is everything, thank you.

Lā, mā abee shayy akhar - (لا، ما أبي شي آخر). No, I don't want anything else.

Example Dialogue for Ordering:

You: As-salām 'alaykum. Mumkin al-menu, min faḍlak? (Peace be upon you. Can I have the menu, please?)

Waiter: Wa 'alaykum as-salām. Tafaddal. (And peace be upon you. Here you go / Please.) (Offering the menu)

You: Shukran. Shū 'andkum gadda laddheeth? (Thanks. What delicious lunch do you have?)

Waiter: 'Andna laham meshwi, aw dajāj ma' timin. (We have grilled meat, or chicken with rice.)

You: Hmm... Abee laham meshwi, wa 'aṣeer limoon. (Hmm... I want grilled meat, and lemon juice.)

Waiter: Hāḍir. Ay shayy akhar? (Ready. Anything else?)

You: La', hātha kull shayy. Shukran. (No, that's everything. Thanks.)

)After eating(

You: Mumkin al-ḥisāb, min faḍlak? (Can I have the bill, please?)

Waiter: Ay, tfaddal. (Yes, here you go.)

Lesson 9: Asking Questions & Negation (General Rules)

Let's generalize how to form questions and negate sentences, as this is fundamental.

Asking Questions:

In Gulf Arabic, questions are often formed by simply raising your intonation at the end of a sentence, or by adding question words.

Shū - (شو؟) ?What?

Alternative: Aysh - (ايش؟) ?What? (Common in Kuwait/ UAE, Qatar, parts of KSA)

Wayn - (وين؟) ?Where?

Mata - (متى؟) ?When?

Kayf - (كيف؟) ?How?

Min - (من؟) ?Who?

Laysh - (ليش؟) ?Why?

Ay - (أي؟) ?Which?

Kam - (كم؟) ?How much/many?

Hal - (هل...؟) ?...Is it...? / Do you...? (More formal, less common in daily speech, usually just intonation)

Examples:

Inta ta'ban - (انت تعبان؟) ?Are you tired? (to a male, with rising intonation)

Wayn raht - (وين رحت؟) Where did you go? (to a male)

Mata tirooh as-sooq - (متى تروح السوق؟) When are you going to the market? (to a male)

Laysh mā teejy - (ليش ما تجي؟) Why aren't you coming? (to a male)

Negation (Making Sentences Negative)

The most common way to negate a verb or a noun/adjective phrase is by using Mā. (ما)

For Verbs: Place Mā directly before the verb.

Ana mā arooh - (أنا ما أروح). I don't go.

Huwa mā yisma - (هو ما يسمع). 'He doesn't hear.

Hiyya mā takul - (هي ما تاكل). She doesn't eat.

For Noun/Adjective Phrases: Place Mā before the phrase.

Mā fih mayy - (ما فيه ماي). There isn't any water.

Explanation: "Fih (فيه) "means "there is".

Hatha mā zeen - (هذا ما زين). This isn't good.

Explanation: "Zeen (زين) "means "good".

Ana mā muhandis - (أنا ما مهندس). I'm not an engineer.

Note: Sometimes Mū (مو) is used, especially for "is not" or "am not".

Ana mū muhandis - (أنا مو مهندس). I'm not an engineer. (More common)

Hatha mū zeen - (هذا موزين). This isn't good. (More common)

Examples:

Mā adri - (ما أدري). I don't know.

Mā abee - (ما أبيع). I don't want.

Hatha al-akul mū laddheeth - (هذا الأكل موزين). This food is not delicious.

Ana mū ta'ban - (أنا موزين). I'm not tired.

Lesson 10: Describing Things (Adjectives) & Colors

Let's learn some common adjectives and colors to help you describe things. Adjectives usually come after the noun they describe.

Common Adjectives:

Adjectives often change slightly depending on whether the noun is masculine or feminine. For simplicity, I'll give the masculine form, and the feminine usually adds an "a" or "ah" sound at the end.

Kabeer / (كبير) Kabeera - (كبيرة) Big

Ṣagheer / (صغير) Ṣagheera - (صغيرة) Small

Jameel / (جميل) Jameela - (جميلة) Beautiful

Qabeeḥ / (قبيح) Qabeeḥa - (قبيحة) Ugly

Qareeb / (قريب) Qareeba - (قريبة) Near / Close

Ba'eed / (بعيد) Ba'eeda - (بعيدة) Far

Naddheef / (نظيف) Naddheefa - (نظيفة) Clean

Wasi / (واسع) 'Wasi'a - (واسعة) Wide / Spacious

Dayyig / (ضيق) Dayyiga - (ضيقة) Narrow / Tight

Jadid / (جديد) Jadida - (جديدة) New

Gadeem / (قديم) Gadeema - (قديمة) Old (for things, not people)

Sare / (سريع) 'Sare'a - (سريعة) Fast

Baṭee / (بطيء) 'Baṭee'a - (بطيئة) Slow

Ghaali / (غالي) Ghaalya - (غالية) Expensive

Rakhees / (رخيص) Rakheesa - (رخيصة) Cheap

Zein / (زين) Zeina - (زينة) Good / Nice

Mō zein - (موزين) Not good / Bad

Hārr - (حار) Hot (for weather/food)

Bārid - (بارد) Cold (for weather/drinks)

Colors (Adjectives):

Colors also follow the masculine/feminine pattern.

Abiyaḍ / (أبيض) Bayḍa - (بيضا) White

Aswad / (أسود) Sawda - (سودا) Black

Aḥmar / (أحمر) Ḥamra - (حمرا) Red

Azrag / (أزرق) Zarga - (زرقا) Blue

Akhḍar / (أخضر) Khaḍra - (خضرا) Green

Aṣfar / (أصفر) Ṣafra - (صفرا) Yellow

Burtuqālī - (برتقالي) Orange (usually doesn't change for fem.)

Banafsajī - (بنفسجي) Purple (usually doesn't change for fem.)

Wardī - (وردي) Pink (usually doesn't change for fem.)

Bunnī - (بني) Brown (usually doesn't change for fem.)

Ramādī - (رمادي) Gray (usually doesn't change for fem.)

Example Sentences with Adjectives:

Hātha al-bayt kabeer - (هذا البيت كبير). This house is big.

As-sayyāra jadida - (السيارة جديدة). The car is new.

Al-jaww ḥārr al-yoom - (الجو حار اليوم). The weather is hot today.

Abee shayy bārid - (أبي شي بارد). I want something cold.

Loon as-sayyāra azrag - (لون السيارة أزرق). The color of the car is blue.

Al-qameeş aswad - (القميص أسود). The shirt is black.

Remember, consistency is key! Try to use these words and phrases in simple sentences. The more you use them, the more natural they will become.

Lesson 11: Family and Relationships

Understanding family terms is crucial in Gulf culture, as family ties are very strong.

Key Family Vocabulary:

'A'ila - (عائلة) Family

Abūy/Abūna - (أبوي/أبونا) My father / Our father

Explanation: You'll often hear "abūy" or "abūna" rather than just "abī" for "my father".

Ummī/Ummna - (أمي/أمنا) My mother / Our mother

Akhūy - (أخوي) My brother

Ukhti - (أختي) My sister

Wālid - (والد) Father (more formal)

Wālida - (والدة) Mother (more formal)

Zōj - (زوج) Husband

Zōja - (زوجة) Wife

Walad - (ولد) Son / Boy

Bint - (بنت) Daughter / Girl

'Am - (عم) Paternal uncle (father's brother)

'Amma - (عمّة) Paternal aunt (father's sister)

Khāl - (خال) Maternal uncle (mother's brother)

Khāla - (خالة) Maternal aunt (mother's sister)

Yadd - (يد) Grandfather (also "jadd" in some dialects)

Yadda - (يدة) Grandmother (also "jadda" in some dialects)

Rafiiij - (رفيج) Friend (male, common in Kuwait/Bahrain)

Sadiiq - (صديق) Friend (male, more general Arabic)

Rafiiija - (رفيجة) Friend (female, common in Kuwait/Bahrain)

Sadiiqa - (صديقة) Friend (female, more general Arabic)

Asking About Family:

Kam akhū 'induk - (كم أخو عندك؟) ?How many brothers do you have?
(to a male)

Explanation: "'Induk" means "you have" (male).

Fee 'induk akhwān w akhawāt - (في عندك إخوان وأخوات؟) ?Do you have
brothers and sisters? (to a male)

Explanation: "Akhwān (إخوان) "is plural for brothers, "akhawāt " (أخوات)
is plural for sisters.

Kayf 'a'iltik - (كيف عائلتك؟) ?How is your family? (to a male)

Hal inta mizawej - (هل انت متزوج؟) ?Are you married? (to a male)

Explanation: "Mizawej (متزوج) "for male, "mizawja (متزوجة) "for
female.

Example Dialogue about Family:

A: Kayf ḥālak ya Ahmed? كيف حالك أحمد (How are you, Ahmed?)

B: Ana bikhayr, al-ḥamdulillāh. Winta? أنا بخير الحمد لله وانت (I'm fine, praise be to God. And you?)

A: Zein. Kam akhū 'induk? زين أخو عندك (Good. How many brothers do you have?)

B: 'Indi akhū wāḥid, w ukhtayn. إندي أخ واحد واختين (I have one brother and two sisters.)

A: Mashā' Allāh. Walidīnik kayfhum? ما شاء الله والدينك كيف هم
(Mashallah. How are your parents?)

B: Hum bikhayr, al-ḥamdulillāh. Shukran 'ala as-su'āl.

هم بخير الحمد لله شكرا على السؤال

(They are fine, praise be to God. Thanks for asking.)

Lesson 12: Expressing Possession & Existence

Two fundamental grammatical structures are expressing "to have" and "there is/are".

"To Have" - ('Ind):

In Gulf Arabic, there's no direct verb "to have." Instead, you use 'Ind - عند) meaning "at/with ("followed by a pronoun suffix.

'Indi - (عندي) I have

'Induk - (عندك) You have (male)

'Indich - (عندج) You have (female)

'Inda - (عنده) He has

'Indaha - (عندها) She has

'Indna - (عندنا) We have

'Indkum - (عندكم) You have (plural)

'Indhum - (عندهم) They have

Examples:

'Indi sayyāra jadida - (عندي سيارة جديدة). I have a new car.

'Inda flūs wājīd - (عنده فلوس وايد). He has a lot of money.

Mā 'indna waqt - (ما عندنا وقت). We don't have time.

Explanation: "Mā" is used for negation, as learned in Lesson 9.
"Waqt (وقت) "means "time".

Hal 'indich jawwāl - (هل عندج جوال؟) ?Do you have a mobile phone?
(to a female)

Explanation: "Jawwāl (جوال) "or "telefōn (تلفون) "for mobile phone.

"There is / There isn't" - (Fee / Mā Fee)

To express "there is/are" or "there isn't/aren't," you use Fee (في) and Mā fee. (ما في)

Fee [thing] - (في [شيء]) There is [thing] / There are [things]

Mā fee [thing] - (ما في [شيء]) There isn't [thing] / There aren't [things]

Examples:

Fee shayy hni - (في شيء هني؟) ?Is there something here?

Fee qahwa bil-bayt - (في قهوة بالبيت؟) ?Is there coffee at home?

Mā fee mushkila - (ما في مشكلة). There is no problem.

Explanation: "Mushka (مشكلة) "means "problem".

Fee naas wājid fil-mall - (في ناس وايد في المول). There are many people in the mall.

Explanation: "Naas (ناس) "means "people".

Lesson 13: Asking About & Expressing Feelings

It's helpful to be able to talk about how you feel.

Common Feeling Adjectives (Masculine/Feminine):

Sa'eed / (سعيد) Sa'eeda - (سعيدة) Happy

Ḥazeen / (حزين) Ḥazeena - (حزينة) Sad

Ta'ban / (تعبان) Ta'bāna - (تعبانة) Tired

Ju'ān / (جوعان) Ju'āna - (جوعانة) Hungry

'Aṭshān' / (عطشان) Aṭshāna - (عطشانة) Thirsty

Marrīḍ / (مريض) Marrīḍa - (مريضة) Sick

Farḥān / (فرحان) Farḥāna - (فرحانة) Joyful / Happy (stronger than sa'eed)

Ghaḍbān / (غضبان) Ghaḍbāna - (غضبانة) Angry

Khafān / (خائفان) Khafāna - (خايفة) Scared

Asking How Someone Feels:

Kayf ḥālak/ḥālich - (كيف حالك/حالك؟) ?How are you? (general, as learned)

Shū fiik - (شو فيك؟) ?What's wrong with you? (to a male)

Shū fiich - (شو فيج؟) ?What's wrong with you? (to a female)

Hal inta ta'ban - (هل انت تعبان؟) ?Are you tired? (to a male)

Expressing Your Feelings:

Ana [feeling adjective] - (أنا [صفة الشعور]) I am [feeling adjective]

Example: Ana ta'ban wāyid - (أنا تعبان وايد). I am very tired.

Aḥiss bi-[feeling] - (أحس ب[الشعور]) I feel [feeling]

Explanation: "Aḥiss (أحس)" means "I feel".

Example: Aḥiss bil-farḥa - (أحس بالفرحة). I feel joy.

Abee anām - (أبي أناام). I want to sleep. (If you're tired)

Abee mayy - (أبي ماي). I want water. (If you're thirsty)

Abee akul - (أبي آكل). I want to eat. (If you're hungry)

Example Dialogue about Feelings:

A: Shū fiik, ya Ali? Tabeen ta'ban? (What's wrong, Ali? Do you look tired?)

B: Ay wallah, ana ta'ban wāyid al-yoom. (Yes, by God, I'm very tired today.)

A: Laysh? Shū sawwayt? (Why? What did you do?)

B: Ashtaghel ktheer, w mā nimit zein. (I worked a lot, and didn't sleep well.)

A: Khalāṣ, rooḥ nām shwayy. Mumkin tishtaghel ba'adeen. (Okay, go sleep a little. You can work later.)

B: Shukran, hatha fikra zeina. (Thanks, that's a good idea.)

Lesson 14: Transportation

Getting around is essential. Here are phrases and vocabulary for transportation.

Key Transportation Vocabulary:

Sayyāra - (سيارة) Car

Taksi - (تاكسي) Taxi (common loanword)

Bāṣ - (باص) Bus (common loanword)

Ṭiyyāra - (طيارة) Airplane

Maṭār - (مطار) Airport

Maḥaṭṭat il-bāṣ - (محطة الباص) Bus station/stop

Tareeq - (طريق) Road / Way

Jame'a - (جامعة) University (often a landmark)

Fundūq - (فندق) Hotel

Safra - (سفرة) Trip / Journey

Riḥla - (رحلة) Flight / Trip (also used for outings)

Sawwāg - (سواق) Driver

Arkab - (أركب) I ride / I get in (a vehicle)

Anzil - (أنزل) I get off / I get out (of a vehicle)

Aswūq - (أسوق) I drive

Asking About & Using Transportation:

Abee taksi, min faḍlak - (أبي تاكسي، من فضلك). I want a taxi, please.

Wayn arooḥ - (وين أروح؟) Where should I go? (Asking a driver)

Arooḥ il-[place] - (أروح إلى [مكان]). I'm going to [place].

Kam il-ujra li-[place] - (كم الأجرة إلى [المكان]؟) How much is the fare to [place]?

Explanation: "Ujra (أجرة)" means "fare".

Waggif hni, min faḍlak - (وقف هني، من فضلك). Stop here, please. (to a male)

Emshi shwayy sidha - (امشي شوي سيده). Go a little straight. (to a driver)

Ayn maḥaṭṭat il-bāṣ - (أين محطة الباص؟) Where is the bus stop? (Slightly more formal "ayn" for "where")

Mata ar-riḥla ila Dubai - (متى الرحلة إلى دبي؟) When is the flight to Dubai?

Hal yimkin narūḥ bil-bāṣ - (هل ممكن نروح بالباص؟) Is it possible we go by bus?

Example Dialogue for Transportation:

You: As-salām 'alaykum, taksi! (Peace be upon you, taxi!)

Driver: Wa 'alaykum as-salām. Wayn tibee? (And peace be upon you. Where do you want to go?)

You: Abee arooḥ il-Funduq al-Kabeer. (I want to go to the Grand Hotel.)

Driver: Ay funduq? Fee ktheer funduq kbar. (Which hotel? There are many big hotels.)

You: Funduq Al-Bayan. (Al-Bayan Hotel.)

Driver: Ah, okay. Kam il-ujra? (Ah, okay. How much is the fare?)

You: Kam tibee? (How much do you want?)

Driver: Khamsa dinar. (5 Dinars.) (In Kuwait, for example, this is reasonable for a short-medium trip.)

You: Ghāli! A'ṭeeka thalātha. (Expensive! I'll give you three.)

Driver: Yallā, arba'a. (Okay, four.)

You: Khalāṣ, yallā. (Done, let's go.)

دليلك إلى التحدث بالعربية الخليجية

Your Guide to Speaking Gulf Arabic

By:

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